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THE LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

To the A.L.A. Council:

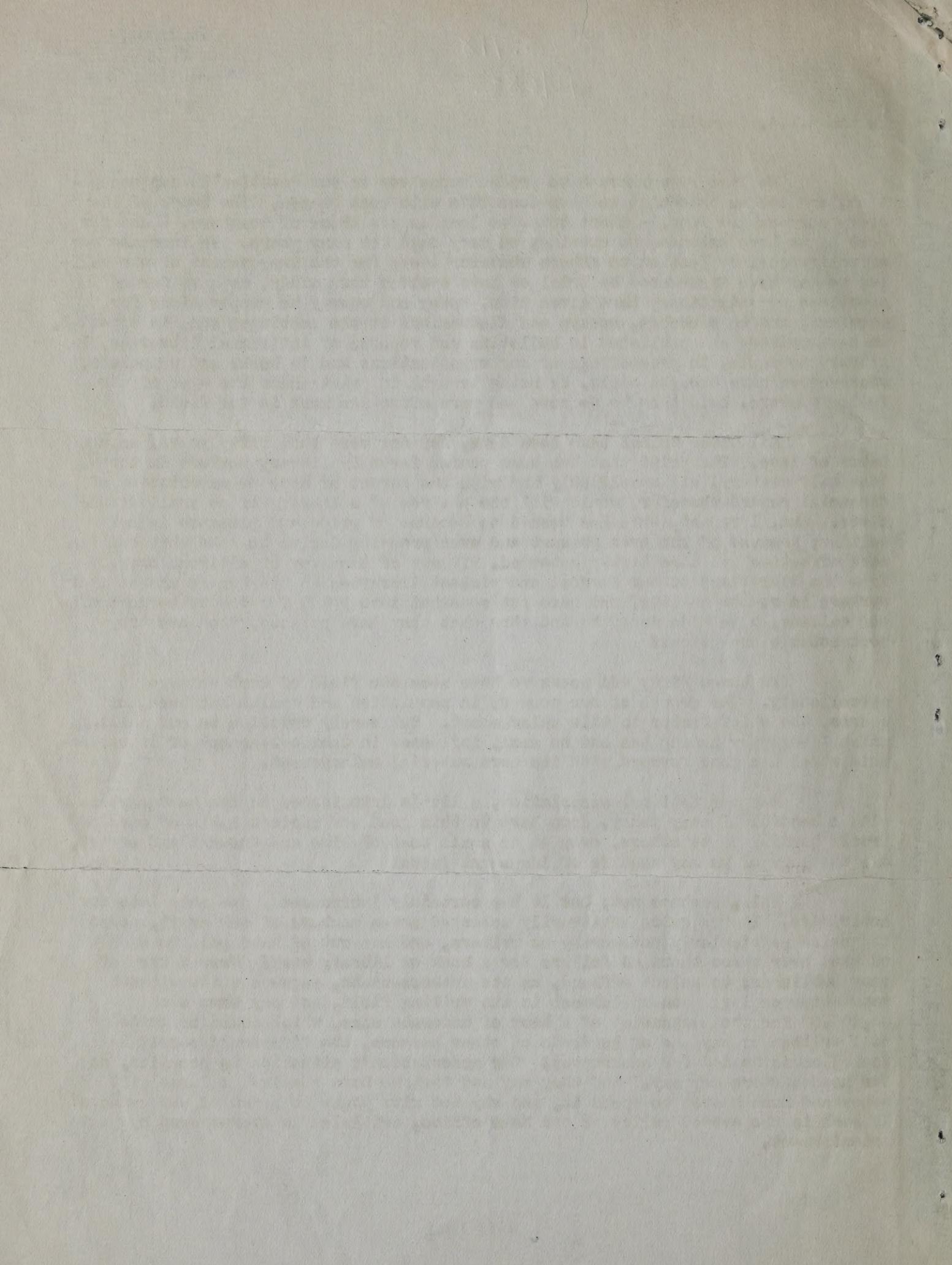
We library workers have prided ourselves on our devotion to our occupation, and let us hope that we have done this with some reason. The hours of library workers are long, - about twice as long as are those of teachers, - and for most of us have extended to evenings on many days for many years. To increase our effectiveness, to pass on to others whatever ideas for the improvement of our calling we may have discovered by trial or have evolved thru study, we have formed countless organizations; have given time, money and energy to preparations for meetings, and to speeches, essays and discussions at the meetings; and, in especial, we have written and published in bulletins and reports of individual libraries, in library journals, in proceedings of our organizations and in books and pamphlets, whatever we have thought would, by being brought in print under the eyes of our fellow workers, help them to do more and more effective work in our field.

All these things have been done, for now more than fifty years, as a labor of love. The print that has been poured forth by library workers in the last half century, all unselfishly and with the rarest of hope or expectation of financial reward therefor, would fill the shelves of a library of no small dimensions. And, I repeat, this has been done because of pride and pleasure in our calling; because of the ever present and ever pressing desire to make that calling more effective and more highly esteemed. If any of the army of diligent ones, from the librarians of our largest and richest libraries to the humble and solitary workers in remote hamlets, who have put somewhat into print for the betterment of our calling, have made money by and thru what they have printed, then are they most notable exceptions!

In these fifty odd years we have seen our field of work enlarge marvellously. The growth of our country in population and wealth has been, of course, the chief factor in this enlargement. But surely devotion to our calling which I began by naming has had no small influence in that betterment of librarianship which has gone forward with its mere material enlargement.

Has our national association, a little intoxicated in its headquarters with a handful of easy money, done harm to this good and ancient habit of ours of freely handing on to others, even at no small cost of time and thought and effort, all that any of us may acquire of ideas and facts?

Well, perhaps not; but it has certainly introduced a new note into our activities. It has quite arbitrarily selected seven members of our craft, persons in nowise particularly noteworthy as writers, and has out of hand paid to each of them over three thousand dollars for a book on library work! Were a firm of book publishers to select offhand, as its authors-to-be, persons quite without reputation or large accomplishment in the writing field, and pay them each \$3,400.00 for the manuscript of a book of moderate size, which could be quite as well written by any one of hundreds of other persons, the firm would surely be looked on as headed for bankruptcy! Our association's situation is peculiar, so our headquarters may say. And they may add that we have received a large gift of money and must hasten to spend it, and why not give plums to a few of our members? If such is the avowed policy at our home office, criticism is overpowered by plain astonishment.



But it is not inexcusable folly in the spending of a donation that I am troubled by. I am trying to visualize the effect on our pride in our calling, and our pleasure in working for it, that will be wrought by this offhand method of selecting a few of our members and rewarding their not highly peculiar efforts beyond all precedent. If money is so plentiful that all sound rules in the art of book publishing can be ignored, why not reward some of those who have already produced good books,-- and have had only a few thanks for their pains? -- And I am not suggesting myself as a proper beneficiary. My rewards have been ample, after their kind!

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Do I need to make it plain that others than the elect seven can write good books on library work? If so, I can say that in the U.S. Catalog Supplement for 1912 to 1917 there are entered, under the headings Librarians, Libraries and Library, 217 books; under the see-also headings under those just noted, there are entered 446 books. Of these, on a rough estimate, about 300 were written by librarians. Say I am over estimating, and call it 200. At that rate, between 1903 and 1928, librarians have brought out a thousand volumes. Reduce my estimate by half, if you wish, and it is quite evident that our book production in the past 25 years has numbered 500 volumes H.W. Wilson's activities, which have been quite successful without a special benefaction either to him or to his writers, surely should suggest to an A.L.A. committee with a vision not inhibited by undue consciousness of greatness, that we have at hand a private enterprise which could easily and quickly have produced seven good textbooks, at no cost to the Association.

Why did it seem so important to bring into being at once seven textbooks on library work? First, a committee of seven persons, no one of whom seems to have acquired by study and practice expertness in the art of teaching or in the management of educational institutions, personally examined all library schools. This cost money. Perhaps to demonstrate that the money had been spent to advantage, some display of work done was needed. Elaborate annual statements of what this committee of seven non-experts thought should be the methods adopted in these schools were worked up, revised and published. These statements in large type, on fine paper and issued separately, as well in the volume with our common every day productions, proved to be the details of one more of the classifying and standardizing processes which have been so harmful to so many institutions in recent years. Then, that precisely the right things might be taught in precisely the right way in these schools, this committee said, "We must have textbooks". The committee assumed that the managers and instructors in library schools do not know "what the library profession is really doing in all its branches"; and so proceeded to hire a man, with no expertness in library work, to show them how text books should be written. Hence the text books.

Our library schools have seemed to welcome the regimentation that was thus imposed on them; and perhaps they did so in fact. But they saw our association sitting silent in the presence of the committee's elaborate exhortations and pronunciamentoes; they noted that the committee was supplied with funds up to thirty thousand dollars per year, and more; they were naturally moved by mention of a Chicago University expert on Curriculum Study and a Columbia expert on Teaching, and they knew that a protest from any one school would open that school to a charge of lese majeste,-- and they all sat silent.

and the same day I got a letter from Mr. C. H. Smith, who had been to the  
place where the accident happened, and said he had seen the body of the  
man who was killed lying on the ground, and that he was dead. He also  
said that the body was covered with a sheet, and that it was impossible to  
see any marks or injuries upon it.

On the 1st instant I got a letter from Mr. C. H. Smith, who said that he had  
seen the body of the man who was killed, and that he had been buried at  
the place where he was found. He also said that the body was covered  
with a sheet, and that he could see no marks or injuries upon it. He  
also said that the body was buried in a hole, and that it was impossible  
to see any marks or injuries upon it.

On the 2nd instant I got a letter from Mr. C. H. Smith, who said that he had  
seen the body of the man who was killed, and that he had been buried at  
the place where he was found. He also said that the body was covered  
with a sheet, and that he could see no marks or injuries upon it. He  
also said that the body was buried in a hole, and that it was impossible  
to see any marks or injuries upon it.

On the 3rd instant I got a letter from Mr. C. H. Smith, who said that he had  
seen the body of the man who was killed, and that he had been buried at  
the place where he was found. He also said that the body was covered  
with a sheet, and that he could see no marks or injuries upon it. He  
also said that the body was buried in a hole, and that it was impossible  
to see any marks or injuries upon it.

This curriculum study expert, who has also guided largely the composition of the text books, has cost us \$16,000. An adviser on educational matters, who was never in the library business, has cost us more than \$12,000. The seven text books under way, and an eighth to come, have cost us in fees to eight authors, \$26,000. Other expenses have brought the total for the eight books up to a total of more than \$100,000.00, or more than \$12,000. each. This is publishing run mad!

Are they good? Probably some of them are. They have cost more than any books on library work ever before produced. They ought to be very, very good. One of them, at least, and the one over the production of which the curriculum study and text book expert had special and particular charge, is very poor, very.

The persons who have been selected as worthy of being paid \$3,000., plus, for a book on library work are:

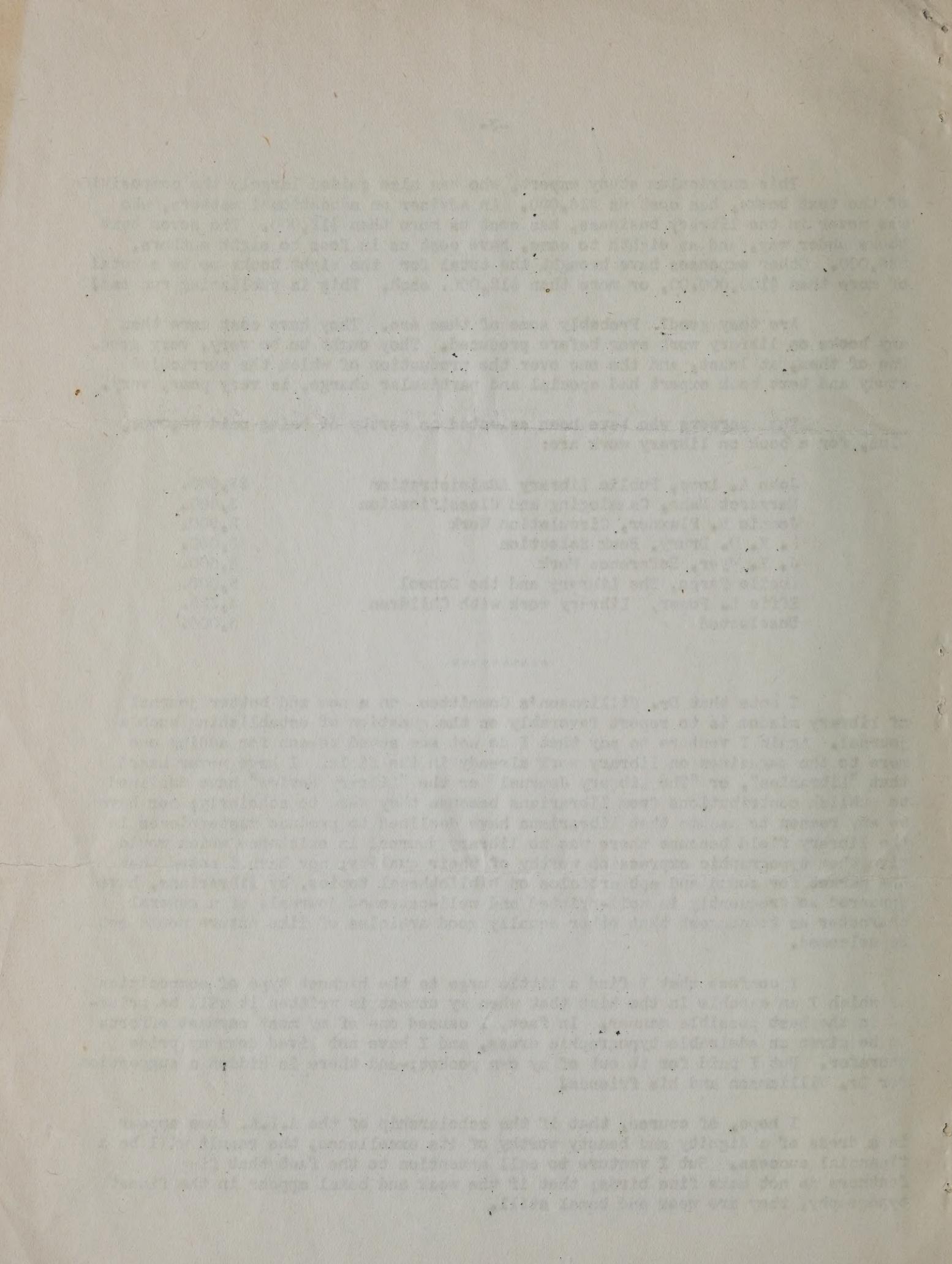
John A. Lowe, Public Library Administration	\$3,600.
Margaret Mann, Cataloging and Classification	3,600.
Jennie M. Flexner, Circulation Work	2,900.
F. K. W. Drury, Book Selection	3,000.
J. I. Wyer, Reference Work	3,600.
Lucile Fargo, The Library and the School	3,000.
Effie L. Power, Library work with Children	3,225.
Unselected	3,000.

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I note that Dr. Williamson's Committee on a new and better journal of library wisdom is to report favorably on the question of establishing such a journal. Again I venture to say that I do not see sound reason for adding one more to the magazines on library work already in the field. I have never heard that "Libraries", or "The Library Journal" or the "Library Review" have declined to publish contributions from librarians because they were too scholarly; nor have we any reason to assume that librarians have declined to produce masterpieces in the library field because there was no library journal in existence which would give them typographic expression worthy of their quality; nor have I noted that the market for sound and apt articles on bibliothecal topics, by librarians, have appeared so frequently in well-printed and well-esteemed journals of a general character as to suggest that other equally good articles of like nature would not be welcomed.

I confess that I find a little urge to the highest type of composition of which I am capable in the hint that when my utmost is written it will be printed in the best possible manner. In fact, I caused one of my most earnest efforts to be given an admirable typographic dress, and I have not lived down my pride therefor. But I paid for it out of my own pocket; - and there is hidden a suggestion for Dr. Williamson and his friends!

I hope, of course, that if the scholarship of the A.L.A. does appear in a dress of a dignity and beauty worthy of its excellence, the result will be a financial success. But I venture to call attention to the fact that fine feathers do not make fine birds; that if the weak and banal appear in the finest typography, they are weak and banal still.



The Board of Education for Librarianship -- an awesome title, by the way, which has put fear into the hearts of managers of library schools, -- seems to have assumed that its powers, and the profusion and the ex-cathedra quality of its utterances, were ample reasons for issuing its orders in type of a little larger size and on paper of better quality than are granted to our ordinary doings. But the Board's reports are not made any better by their dress. The fine feathers aphorism still holds true.

Possibly Dr. Bostwick of the committee on the proposed new journal will discover a need in the library world as emphatic and as costly to supply as was the need of the Survey, and appealing so strongly to our benefactors that we can put fifty-odd thousand dollars into it. But we should not forget that of the ten thousand members of our association only 1500 have found, in two years, that they need the indispensable survey! May the new journal do better.

(Signed) J.C. Dana.

December, 1928.



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